

# **TEL•A•RIDE**



**Paratransit Service  
Rider's Manual**

## A Message from Tel-A-Ride

The Charleston Area Regional Transportation Authority (CARTA) and Tel-A-Ride are pleased to present the Tel-A-Ride Rider's Manual. We hope that the information included in this manual will answer any questions you may have about Tel-A-Ride and will provide guidelines to help you better utilize the service. This manual contains valuable information – in question and answer format – about Tel-A-Ride policies and procedures as well as other important features of the service.

In our continuing effort to provide a safe, reliable, and efficient paratransit service, it is important to us that our customers be well informed. If you have any questions or comments concerning Tel-A-Ride, we encourage you to contact Tel-A-Ride at 843-747-0007, or CARTA's Administrative Offices at 843-724-7420, extension 4.

## **Tel-A-Ride Questions & Answers**

### **What is Tel-A-Ride?**

Tel-A-Ride is a specialized curb-to-curb transportation service that is available to persons with disabilities who are unable to use the local public bus service. Tel-A-Ride is a shared-ride service, which means that passengers share the vehicle with others traveling in the same direction at the same time. All Tel-A-Ride vehicles are wheelchair lift-equipped.

### **Who is eligible for Tel-A-Ride?**

In order to be eligible for Tel-A-Ride, you must have a specific impairment which restricts your mobility. Persons who cannot use public transit vehicles, person who cannot travel without assistance, and persons with mobility impairments that prevent them from traveling to or from a bus stop are all examples of eligible applicants. Persons interested in applying for Tel-A-Ride may call 843-724-7420, extension 3, to request an application.

### **What is curb-to-curb service?**

Curb-to-curb service means that it is the rider's responsibility to meet the driver at the curb. As a safety precaution, drivers are required to stay with their vehicles and passengers. Drivers will assist you in and out of the vehicle, but they cannot assist from a residence or destination point. In other words, the drivers cannot assist you up and down steps or ramps, and under no circumstances are drivers permitted to enter a passenger's residence.

## Who decides if I'm eligible for Tel-A-Ride?

All Tel-A-Ride applications are reviewed by the Intelitran Manager. The ADA Specialist will determine whether an applicant is eligible for the service, based on guidelines established by the Americans with Disabilities Act, within 21 days of application. For more information, please call 843-724-7420, extension 3.

## If an applicant is determined to be ineligible, can he or she appeal the decision?

Any individual who is determined to be ineligible for Tel-A-Ride may file an appeal with CARTA within 60 days of notice of ineligibility. Appeals will be heard by at least three members of CARTA's ADA Advisory Committee. Please forward all appeals to:

CARTA

Attn: ADA Advisory Committee

36 John Street

Charleston, SC 29403

## How do I schedule a ride once I'm determined eligible?

If you are eligible for Tel-A-Ride, you will receive a letter notifying you that your application has been approved. You will also receive a Tel-A-Ride Identification Card. Once you have received your card, you may begin to use the service.\* To schedule a ride, you must call the Tel-A-Ride office at 843-747-0007 and make a reservation. With the exception of medical appointments, return trips must be scheduled when you make your initial reservation.

\* The Tel-A-Ride ID card must be shown each and every time the service is used.

## What if I don't know what time I will need to return?

If you are traveling to a medical appointment, you may call Tel-A-Ride when you are ready to return home. If you choose to call for a return, please remember that you could wait as long as two or more hours to be picked up if the van is not in the area. With the exception of medical appointments, you must schedule a return time when you make your initial reservation.

## Am I guaranteed a trip when I request it?

If seating is available, Tel-A-Ride will make every possible effort to schedule your trip when you request it. In the event there is no opening at the requested time, a pickup within one hour of your requested time will be provided on a space-available basis.

## How soon before I would like to ride should I make a reservation?

Tel-A-Ride accepts reservations up to 14 days in advance of a scheduled trip. At a minimum, passengers must make their reservations no later than the day before the desired day of travel. *Due to limited space, it is suggested that reservations be made as soon as possible.*

## When can I make reservations?

Reservations can be made by calling the Tel-A-Ride office at 843-747-0007, extension 3. Reservation hours are from 8AM to 5PM Monday - Sunday. A Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) is available and can also be accessed by dialing 843-744-4555.

## **Can I only use Tel-A-Ride to go to medical appointments?**

There are no restrictions on trip purposes. You may use Tel-A-Ride to travel anywhere in the service area. Many of our riders use the service to go to the mall, the hairdresser, to visit friends, and much, much more!

## **What is the Tel-A-Ride service area?**

The Tel-A-Ride service area has been set up to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) mandated levels, which is a 3/4 mile corridor on either side of current fixed-route bus lines. Tel-A-Ride services all of Peninsula Charleston, and portions of James Island, West Ashley, Mt. Pleasant, Sullivan's Island\*, Isle of Palms\*, and North Charleston. For more information, please call 843-747-0007.

*\* Service available effective 01/01/06.*

## **What is the fare for Tel-A-Ride?**

The fare for Tel-A-Ride is \$2.50 for each one-way trip and must be paid when you board the vehicle. Only exact fare will be accepted. Trip tickets are available by mail or can be purchased in person at the Tel-A-Ride office. If you wish to receive your tickets by mail, you will need to send a check or money order plus shipping and handling costs. All tickets will be sent by registered mail requiring a signature. Please call 843-747-0007, extension 3, for more information.

## **What kind of training have the Tel-A-Ride drivers had?**

All Tel-A-Ride drivers have been carefully selected and have undergone extensive training in both vehicle operation and passenger assistance. Please note that while all Tel-A-Ride drivers have been trained in first-aid, they are not emergency medical technicians.

## **When does Tel-A-Ride operate?**

Tel-A-Ride service is available during the same hours and within a 3/4 mile corridor of regular fixed-route service. For more specific information regarding service availability, please call 843-747-0007, extension 3.

## **What if I need a personal care attendant to ride with me?**

If you require the assistance of another person to complete your trip, a personal care attendant may accompany you on Tel-A-Ride at no charge. You must indicate the need for a personal care attendant when you apply for Tel-A-Ride. For scheduling purposes, you must also indicate that an attendant will be traveling with you when you make a reservation. Attendants may not travel alone or be picked up or dropped off at any other location than that of the eligible client.

## **Can someone other than a personal care attendant ride with me?**

If you are being accompanied by someone whose presence is not required to complete your trip, that person is considered a companion and must pay the \$2.50 fare. One companion may travel with you on a space-available basis. You must indicate that a companion will be traveling with you when you call for a reservation. Companions may not travel alone or be picked up or dropped off at any other location than that of the eligible client.

## **How early should I be ready on the day I have a trip scheduled?**

You are responsible for being ready and at the curb 15 minutes before your scheduled pickup time. Tel-A-Ride vans are considered on time if they arrive 15 minutes prior to or 15 minutes after the scheduled pickup time. The Tel-A-Ride van will wait only five minutes after arriving at your pickup location.

## **What happens if I miss a scheduled trip?**

If you miss a scheduled trip, you will be required to pay the fare for the missed trip the next time that you use Tel-A-Ride. If you cancel your trip less than 24 hours in advance, you are considered a late cancellation. If you do not cancel at all, you are considered a “no-show.” No-shows are a disservice to other Tel-A-Ride patrons and should be avoided whenever possible. Continued failure to cancel unwanted previously scheduled trips may result in suspension of service.

## **What if I change my mind about where I want to go when I board the vehicle?**

You must notify Tel-A-Ride of any change in destination at least one hour before your pickup time, not when you board the vehicle. Unless properly notified, Tel-A-Ride will not transport you to a destination other than the destination that you originally requested. If at all possible, Tel-A-Ride will accommodate the change.

## **What if I will be using Tel-A-Ride for work or school or for other routine travel?**

Individuals who have routine travel requirements such as school, work, regular medical appointments, etc., may apply for subscription service. With subscription service, you are not required to call each time to schedule these regular trips unless your travel arrangements change. A limited number of subscription applications will be accepted on a first-come-first served basis.

## **Can I bring bags or packages on the vehicle with me?**

Due to space limitations, Tel-A-Ride passengers are permitted to carry only two bags or packages on Tel-A-Ride vehicles.

## **Are children allowed to ride on the vehicles?**

A dependent child may travel with a certified Tel-A-Ride patron on a space-available basis. Children six or under will be permitted to travel with a parent, free of charge. Children over the age of six will be required to pay the \$2.50 fare. Parents are responsible for providing child restraint seats for children aged three and under. Any child not riding in a car seat must sit on the seat of the vehicle and use a seat belt. Children may not be held on an adult’s lap. (Note: While children may be certified to use Tel-A-Ride, children under ten will not be permitted to travel unaccompanied by an adult.)

## **Are animals allowed on the Tel-A-Ride vehicles?**

Only service animals are permitted to travel with Tel-A-Ride passengers.

## **Do I have to wear a seat belt?**

For your safety, passengers are required to use seat belts and wheelchair-restraining devices at all times. The driver will assist passengers with seat belts and will secure wheelchairs using a four-point tie down. The driver will not operate the vehicle unless all passengers are properly secured.

## What if I have a complaint or compliment about Tel-A-Ride?

Please forward all complaints and compliments to:

CARTA

36 John Street

Charleston, SC 29403

Phone: 843-724-7420, extension 4 / TDD 843-724-7190

Fax: 843-720-1985

[www.ridecarta.com](http://www.ridecarta.com)

Please include your name, address, phone number, the date of your trip, and a description of the incident (where applicable).

## Can a person who is visiting Charleston use Tel-A-Ride if he or she has a mobility impairment?

A visitor to the Charleston area may use Tel-A-Ride if he or she is certified by another transit system or is found to be eligible for the service in Charleston. Likewise, a Tel-A-Ride patron may be eligible for similar service in other cities. Your Tel-A-Ride identification card will certify your eligibility for paratransit service in Charleston.

## Can I smoke on the vehicles?

Smoking, eating, and drinking are not permitted on Tel-A-Ride vehicles.

## Can my Tel-A-Ride eligibility be suspended?

Service may be denied to any rider who violates the rights of other passengers using the service. This includes violent, illegal, or disruptive behavior that may threaten the safety of Tel-A-Ride personnel or other passengers. Service may also be suspended if a rider demonstrates a pattern of being a “no-show.” Riders will not be penalized for events or circumstances out of their control.

## If I am denied service, can I appeal it?

Appeals may be filed with CARTA within 60 days of notification of service denial. You will then have the opportunity to appear before the Tel-A-Ride Appeals Committee. Please forward all appeals to:

CARTA

Attn: Tel-A-Ride Appeals

36 John Street

Charleston, SC 29403

## Reminder

At Tel-A-Ride, your satisfaction is very important to us and we depend on your assistance to keep us informed about the quality of service that you are receiving. Please feel free to call the Tel-A-Ride office at 843-747-0007 or CARTA Administrative Offices at 843-724-7420, extension 4 if you have any questions, comments, or suggestions about Tel-A-Ride that will help us improve the service.

***THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATRONAGE OF TEL-A-RIDE***

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**TEL·A·RIDE**

3664 Leeds Avenue  
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Phone (843) 747-0007  
TDD (843) 747-1499